

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

1. (Currently amended) An isolated DNA molecule from a *Bacillus* species encoding a thermostable tau subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme, the isolated DNA molecule hybridizing to the complete complement of SEQ ID NO: 181 under hybridization conditions that are at least as stringent as use of a medium comprising ~~0.9M sodium citrate buffer at a temperature of 37°C~~ 5X sodium citrate buffer and at a temperature of 65°C, followed by washing in 5X sodium citrate buffer at 65°C,
wherein the encoded thermostable tau subunit comprises the nucleotide binding motif of SEQ ID NO: 17 and is capable of associating a polymerase with a clamp loader complex.

2. (Original) The isolated DNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the *Bacillus* species is *Bacillus stearothermophilus*.

3-5 (Cancelled)

6. (Original) An expression system comprising an expression vector into which is inserted a heterologous DNA molecule according to claim 1.

7. (Original) A host cell comprising a heterologous DNA molecule according to claim 1.

8. (Original) A method of producing a recombinant thermostable tau subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme from a *Bacillus* species, said method comprising:
transforming a host cell with the heterologous DNA molecule according to claim 1 under conditions suitable for expression of the tau subunit, and
isolating the tau subunit.

9. (Original) An isolated DNA molecule from *Bacillus stearothermophilus* encoding a tau subunit of a DNA polymerase III enzyme, wherein the tau subunit is capable of forming a portion of a clamp loader that can cooperate with a DNA polymerase to form a DNA polymerase III-like particle.

10-11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously presented) An isolated DNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the tau subunit encoded by the DNA molecule is at least 80 percent identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 182.

13. (Previously presented) An isolated DNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the tau subunit encoded by the DNA molecule is at least 90 percent identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 182.

14. (Previously presented) An isolated DNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the tau subunit encoded by the DNA molecule is at least 95 percent identical to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 182.

15. (Previously presented) An isolated DNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the DNA molecule is at least 90 percent identical to the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 181.

16. (Previously presented) An isolated DNA molecule according to claim 1, wherein the DNA molecule is at least 95 percent identical to the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 181.

17. (Previously presented) An isolated DNA molecule that encodes the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 182.

18. (Previously presented) The isolated DNA molecule according to claim 17, wherein the DNA molecule comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO: 181.

19. (Previously presented) An expression system comprising an expression vector into which is inserted a heterologous DNA molecule according to claim 17.

20. (Previously presented) A host cell comprising a heterologous DNA molecule according to claim 17.

21. (Previously presented) A method of producing a recombinant thermostable tau subunit of a DNA polymerase III-type enzyme, said method comprising:
transforming a host cell with the heterologous DNA molecule according to claim 17 under conditions suitable for expression of the tau subunit, and
isolating the tau subunit.